

New Jersey's Long-Range Plan for Higher Education

A BLUEPRINT FOR EXCELLENCE - STAGE 1

Abbreviated Overview

Higher education has become increasingly important to the success and the quality of life of individuals, states, and the nation. New Jersey's economic competitiveness and prosperity are directly related to the quality and capacity of its colleges and universities, which develop human potential and discover and apply knowledge through teaching, research, and service.

Consistent with its statutory responsibility, the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education, in collaboration with the Presidents' Council, institutional board of trustee representatives, and other stakeholders, began facilitating the development of a long-range plan for higher education in April 2002. This plan includes a vision for higher education, seven principal state objectives, and initial action plans and performance measures. **It also proposes an unprecedented new compact between the state and higher education, calling for a significant state investment and a measurable return on that investment by institutions.**

The plan calls for using the state's additional investment in higher education to do the following:

- Achieve greater levels of excellence
- Increase capacity
- Expand student aid
- Expand collaboration with the P-12 community and among institutions
- Create innovative partnerships with business and other sectors
- Dramatically expand research and excellence at the public research universities

Colleges and universities in New Jersey will need increased and predictable operating support and a major infusion of capital funds to help meet these growing expectations.

Over 500 stakeholders, including business leaders, government officials, legislative staff, community leaders, students, parents, trustees, faculty, alumni, college administrators, and others were involved in the planning process. Stakeholders served on issue teams, attended conferences, and provided feedback on the Stage 1 draft plan through public forums and written commentary. The Commission on Higher Education adopted Stage 1 of the plan in November 2003.

The plan recognizes that New Jersey stands at a crossroads. A handful of states will separate themselves from the others by harnessing the intellectual power of their colleges and universities to propel their economies forward and to increase the quality of life for all residents. This plan seeks to firmly establish New Jersey among those special states.

The long-range plan has been developed to achieve the following vision for the state:

*New Jersey and its colleges and universities
embrace their shared responsibility to create and sustain
a higher education system that is among the best in the world,
enabling all people to achieve their maximum potential, fostering
democratic principles, improving the quality of life, and
supporting the state's success in a global economy.*

To achieve this vision, recommendations were developed in four categories: Quality, Capacity, Resources, and Collaboration. Within those four areas, seven principal state objectives were identified to realize the vision. Achievement of these objectives is dependent upon a state and institutional commitment to the compact.

PRINCIPAL STATE OBJECTIVES

The Foundation of the State Plan for Higher Education

- I. Achieve and sustain higher levels of excellence in teaching and learning, research, and public service in all sectors, valuing differences in institutional missions and using resources effectively and efficiently.
- II. Support targeted, multifaceted increases in capacity and specific state and campus programs to (1) prepare a growing and increasingly diverse population for responsible citizenship in a democratic society, and (2) attract more New Jersey students to New Jersey institutions and prepare them for high-demand occupations.
- III. Support financial aid programs that enable New Jersey students from all backgrounds to afford higher education of high quality.
- IV. Establish and implement funding policies and methodologies that provide sufficient and reasonably predictable state operating support and ongoing state capital investments for the public research universities, state colleges and universities, community colleges, and independent institutions to provide the fundamental infrastructure necessary to achieve the state's vision for higher education.

- V. Encourage and enhance coordination and collaboration between and among all educational institutions in the state, including P-12 schools and associate and baccalaureate degree-granting institutions, to facilitate transition from each educational level to the next, to develop mutually beneficial partnerships, and to improve the quality of teaching and learning at all levels.
- VI. Encourage and expedite systemic, innovative, and institutionalized partnerships and other collaborations between higher education and other sectors of society, including business and industry, the nonprofit sector, and the public sector to help meet the state's most pressing workforce needs and to create nationally competitive programs of research and development.
- VII. Enhance the public research universities, either through restructuring or increased collaboration, to improve (1) the overall educational excellence of the universities; (2) collaboration in teaching, research, and service; and (3) the state's competitiveness for federal and other support for biomedical, biotechnology, and related research.

The adoption of these principal objectives provided the foundation to propose initial action plans and identify key performance measures related to their implementation. Achievement of the objectives through the coordinated efforts of boards of trustees, presidents, the Commission on Higher Education, state leaders, and other stakeholders will make the vision for higher education a reality.

NEXT STEPS

The blueprint for higher education through 2010 is already guiding efforts to create and sustain a system of colleges and universities that is among the best in the world. Preliminary steps were undertaken during the summer and early fall of 2003 to pave the way for initial implementation. In early 2004, a summary of specific responsibilities was provided to institutions and other entities to initiate their work. And the Commission on Higher Education has been fully engaged in Stage 1 implementation responsibilities and the development of Stage 2 since February.

During Stage 2 of the planning process, performance measures will be further developed. To varying degrees, full achievement of performance measures will be influenced by levels of state operating aid and capital support, student tuition and fees, and external support. In the initial years, progress may be modest on some measures given the time necessary to achieve results. Specific recommendations regarding research universities and economic development will also be integrated into the long-range plan during Stage 2. The plan will then be reviewed annually and revised as needed based on progress and changes in circumstances.

Stage 1 of the blueprint is available on the Commission's website: www.state.nj.us/highereducation . Periodic updates will also be posted on the website.